

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 902

By Parkinson

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Apostle William A. Adkins, Jr., and First Lady Linda Kerr Adkins for their meritorious service to Greater Imani Church.

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee has been fortunate during its history to benefit from the outstanding leadership provided by those committed ministers of the Gospel who lead churches across this State and who, with their congregations, provide the bedrock strength that defines an orderly and just society; and

WHEREAS, Apostle William A. "Bill" Adkins, Jr. and First Lady Linda Kerr Adkins are two such stalwart servants of the Lord. Apostle Adkins has faithfully served as the pastor of Greater Imani Church in Memphis for more than twenty years; and

WHEREAS, born in Memphis on February 5, 1948, Apostle Adkins is the son of Reverend William A. Adkins, a Baptist Minister, and Georgia Hopkins Adkins, the first African-American registered nurse hired at John Gaston Hospital, now the Regional Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, deeply believing that God's divine grace, love, and mercy extends to all people equally, Apostle Adkins has been active in the Civil Rights Movement from childhood, participating with his father and mother in the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and later working as a member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee; and

WHEREAS, before hearing the divine call to ministry, William A. Adkins pursued a career in the highly-competitive radio and television industry, serving with acumen and alacrity as a news announcer for WLOK, WDIA, WKDJ, WHBQ, and WMC and as a news anchor at WPTY-TV; and

WHEREAS, realizing the importance of a formal education in fulfilling his God-given purpose in life, he completed his undergraduate education at Christian Brothers College, earned a Masters of Divinity degree from Cornerstone Theological Seminary, obtained a Doctor of Ministry from Belsar-Trinity Bible College, and graduated from the Harvard Divinity College Leadership Institute; and

WHEREAS, this visionary leader, with inspiration from the Spirit and the support of twenty-nine dedicated friends and family members, founded Greater Imani Church and Christian Center on November 1, 1989; and

WHEREAS, since taking the helm at this blessed house of faith, Bill Adkins has served with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love, using his gifts of teaching and preaching the Word to bring the Lost to Christ and growing the flock to more than 5,000 members; and

WHEREAS, always seeking new ways to provide hope and communicate God's love to his community, this steadfast servant of the Almighty is also the Chief Executive Officer of the Imani Telecast Network and shares his faith with thousands of households via weekly television, internet, and radio programs; and

WHEREAS, this talented evangelist can also effectively communicate his passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the written word; he has penned several, nationally-acclaimed books, including *From Africa to Bethlehem*, *Living in the Spirit*, and *Thank You for Talking About Me*; and

WHEREAS, Apostle Adkins has carried the banner of Christ on numerous missionary journeys to Africa and the Caribbean, establishing health clinics in Senegal, Gambia, and Ghana and actively supporting numerous economic developments on the continent of African; and

WHEREAS, recognized around the world as a humanitarian and scholar, Dr. Bill Adkins has stood before mayors, governors, presidents, and international dignitaries on behalf of numerous worthy causes and concerns; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Bill Adkins was named “Memphis’ Most Passionate Preacher” by readers of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, received an Honorary Doctorate of Human Letters from the University of Ghana, has been featured on *Dan Rather Reports*, was enstooled as an Ashanti Chief in Ghana, and has been interviewed by the BBC, NBC, Australia’s *Today Program*, and *USA Today*; and

WHEREAS, his insightful sermons have been featured in *The African American Pulpit* and *Hope and Healing*, and his life-changing lesson, “A Dream Fulfilled,” is now posted in the Library of Congress; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Adkins success depends greatly on the love, companionship, and support of his wife, Linda Adkins, who has graciously undertaken a life of service and Christian stewardship with her husband; and

WHEREAS, the youngest of eight children born to Henry and Rosie Kerr, First Lady Linda Kerr Adkins attended the University of Memphis, where she majored in Broadcast Journalism, earned membership into the prestigious Public Relations Society of America, and graduated cum laude; and

WHEREAS, listening to her entrepreneurial spirit, Mrs. Adkins launched Adkins & Associates, a public relations firm that specializes in trans-cultural and trans-linguistic services and assists medical professionals in developing cultural language style; and

WHEREAS, ever conscious of her role as the Apostle’s wife, First Lady Adkins has always stood steadfastly by his side, preparing church programs, singing in the choir, cleaning the sanctuary, and providing invaluable assistance to her husband on his mission trips; and

WHEREAS, her commitment to the ministry continued when she opened the renowned Carter G. Woodson Christian Academy, which has served as a model for other day cares throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, wholly devoted to their family, Dr. and Mrs. Adkins are inspiring role models to their four precious children: Taihia, Ronne, Christopher, and William, III; and

WHEREAS, throughout their estimable careers as religious leaders and humble servants of God, Dr. and Mrs. Adkins have demonstrated the utmost compassion, ability, and integrity,

winning the unbridled respect and admiration of the many and diverse members of their congregation at Greater Imani Church; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we commend Apostle William A. Adkins, Jr., and First Lady Linda Kerr Adkins for their meritorious service to the congregants of Greater Imani Church, salute their impeccable character and their stalwart commitment to living their lives with courage and conviction, and extend to them our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.